The King Who Swept the Road

Scene One

(The King is writing a letter. He speaks it aloud.)

Prataparudga: My dear Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, you know my heart, please arrange a meeting for me with Lord Caitanya.
(He claps his hands and a servant comes before him.)
Please take this letter to Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya.
(The servant takes the letter to SB on the other side of the stage. SB sets aside his studies and reads the letter.)

Sarvabhauma: Thank you, I will ask Lord Caitanya.
(returns and writes a reply for the servant to carry to the King.)
Please take this message to King Prataparuda. Thank you.
(The servant returns to the King, knocks, and hands the reply to the King. The king reads it.)

Prataparudga: Oh no! I've been refused! I will not give up!! I must see Lord Caitanya!!
(He writes another letter.)
Please appeal, on my behalf, to all the devotees of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. They can ask Him to speak with me. Only by their mercy will I ever be able to offer myself at His lotus feet. If Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu refuses again to see me, I shall give up my kingdom, become a mendicant and beg from door to door.
(He hands the message to the servant who takes it to SB.)

Sarvabhauma: Oh no! The king of Orissa is threatening to become a mendicant if Lord Caitanya does not see him!

Narrator: Sarvabhauma took the letter to the devotees of the Lord and told them of the King's desire to see Lord Caitanya and gets His mercy. Everyone was astounded to hear of Maharaj Prataparuda's great devotion to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Advaita: The Lord will never agree to meet with a King. To request such a meeting might make Him very unhappy.

Sarvabhauma: I have an idea. Let us go and see Lord Caitanya but rather than ask Him to meet the King again, we shall simply describe the King's good behavior.

Devotee: Yes, that is a good idea. Let us all go to the residence of Lord Caitanya.
(All exit.)

Narrator: So, the devotees went to Lord Caitanya but, once there however, no one dared utter one word. When Lord Caitanya understood that the devotees were again requesting Him to meet with King Prataparuda, He was very happy, within Himself, to hear of the devotion of King Prataparuda but, externally He pretended to be displeased.

Caitanya: I am a sannyasi and people would make fun of me if I met with a worldly man like this king.

Nityananda: I have an idea! It might not be necessary for You to meet with the king, immediately. If you kindly send one of your garments to King Prataparuda, it would be a sign that he could live in hope of seeing you sometime in the future.

Caitanya: Whatever you, My devotees, decide to do, I shall accept.

All: Jai! Jai! Hari bol Hari bol!!
(all exit)

Narrator: When King Prataparuda received the Lord's cloth, he felt great ecstasy and worshipped the cloth as if it were Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself.

King Prataparuda Had a minister named Ramananda Roy who had a deep love for both the king and Lord Caitanya. King Prataparuda gave RR permission to leave his government work and go to stay with Lord Caitanya and serve Him.

King: Ramananda Roy, go to Lord Caitanya and, as often as possible, send me news of His activities. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu will surely be merciful to you. Therefore, I beg you to ask Lord Caitanya to meet with me.

Ramananda My dear king, I give you my promise.

Narrator: Ramananda Roy did as he promised and whenever he had a chance he would inform Lord Caitanya of how much love

the King had for Him.

(Lord Caitanya enters.)

Ramananda My dear Lord Caitanya, I have spoken to you may times of King Prataparuda's love for You and I know Your mind has be softened towards him. Will you please show Your lotus feet to him, at least once?

Caitanya: My dear Ramananda Roy, for a sannyasi to meet with a king is not proper. Just as a spot of black ink on a pure white cloth, so small a fault in a sannyasi is seen by everyone. They will talk and gossip about him at every chance.

Ramananda: But, my Lord, You have given audience to and saved so many sinful people! And this king is Your devotee and a servant of Lord Krsna!

Caitanya: What you say is true, but still I cannot agree to meet him. But, as you are so eager for me to meet the king, I will agree to meet with his son. The son represents the father and his meeting with Me would be just as good as the king's meeting with me.

Ramananda: Thank you, my Lord, you are so merciful!
(Both exit)

Scene Two - The Palace

(Ramananda Roy and King Prataparuda enter.)

Ramananda Lord Caitanya has agreed to meet with your son. Isn't this wonderful news?! I came directly here as soon as I could to tell you.

(King Prataparuda is very happy. He claps his hands and a servant enters.)

Go and call my son. Tell him I wish to speak to him at once!

(The servant leaves. The son enters.)

Ahhh, my son! Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, Who is Krsna Himself has agreed to see you on my behalf! Today you will achieve the perfection of your life. Go and bathe, dress in yellow cloth and decorate yourself with ornaments. You can go back to Lord Caitanya's ashram with Ramananda Roy.

Prince: Yes, Father. I am so happy, thank you. I will dress with care and return soon.
(All exit.)

Scene Three - Lord Caitanya's Ashram

Narrator: The Prince's dark complexion combined with his bodily features, yellow dhoti and ornaments reminded Lord Caitanya of His beloved Lord Krsna.
(Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityananda, and Advaita Acarya are on stage as Ramananda Roy and the prince enter.)

Caitanya: Here is a great devotee. Seeing him everyone can remember the Supreme Personality of Godhead. I am much obliged to the king for sending this boy.
(Lord Caitanya embraces the prince.)

Prince: Krsna! Krsna!
(The prince dances with joy.)

Devotee: This prince is so fortunate!

Sarvabhauma: Yes indeed! He has received the special mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu!

Caitanya: Be calm now and return to your father. But, I order you to come here daily to visit me.

Prince: Oh yes, my Lord! You are so compassionate!
(All exit)

Narrator: So, Ramananda Roy took the Prince back to his father and described all that had happened. The king's happiness knew no bounds and he embraced his son with as much happiness as if the boy were Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself! From that day on, the prince was counted as one of the Lord's most intimate devotees.
Many days passed and soon it was time for the Rathayatra Festival of Lord Jagannath.

Advaita: How merciful is Lord Jagannath that He allows everyone to have His darshan!

Sarvabhauma: So many of His devotees are gathered here today!

Devotee: Look! Here is Lord Jagannath! I see His chariot coming down the road!

Advaita: Is that not King Prataparuda before the cart? What is he doing?

Sarvabhauma: King Prataparuda himelf has taken up a broom to sweep the road where Lord Jagannath's cart will go!

Devotee: Yes, just see, it is a broom with a golden handle!

Nityananda: Even though he is the owner of a royal throne, he is sprinkling the road with sandalwood scented water and performing menial service for the pleasure of Lord Jagannath!

Caitanya: This makes Me very happy, indeed! Come, let us chant and dance and have kirtan to glorify Lord Jagannath!!

Narrator: Lord Caitanya danced and danced for the pleasure of Lord Jagannath. Sometimes Lord Jagannath stopped His cart and would not move because He was so entranced by watching Lord Caitanya's dancing! Lord Caitanya also displayed His mystic potency by appearing in seven different kirtan parties at once. He showed special favor to King Prataparuda by allowing the king and Sarvabhauma to be the only two people who were able to see this.

The dancing of Lord Caitanya so astonished King Prataparuda that he could only stand still and watch, filled with ecstatic love of Krsna. Finally, the procession reached a village where everyone came out to offer prasadam to Lord Jagannath.

Devotee: Come, Lord Caitanya, here is a peaceful and cool garden where You and Your devotees may rest and refresh Yourselves.

All: Jai! Jai!

Nityananda: Here is a nice flat place for you to lay on my Lord.
(The devotees rest. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and Prataparuda enter. King Prataparuda has changed his clothes and now wears a simple white dhoti and chaddar.)

Sarvabhauma: Now you are dressed like a simple Vaisnava, it will

be possible for you to approach Lord Caitanya and receive His full mercy. Go now while He is resting.

King: (approaches Lord Caitanya) *Hare Krsna Hare Krsna Krsna Krsna Hare Hare*
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
I will massage the lotus feet of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Thus, I can offer Him some personal service. This is my great good fortune!
(He sings about Krsna while he gently massages the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya.)
Jaya Radha Madhava Kunja Bihari
Gopijnana Vallabha Giridhanadari
Yasoda Nandana Brajajnana Rajana
Yamuna Tira Vanachari

Caitanya: Oh, you are glorifying Radha and Krsna so sweetly! Please go on singing!

King: Jaya Radha ...
(Lord Caitanya emraces King Prataparuda.)

Caitanya: You have given me great happiness but I have nothing to give you in return. Therefore, I can only embrace you!
(Lord Caitanya embraces King Prataparuda again and again and also chants Jaya Radha Madhava.)
You have done so much for Me. You have appeared unexpectedly and sang to Me about Krsna's nectarean pastimes! Who are you?

King: My Lord, I am the most obedient servant of Your servants and it is my only hope that you will accept me as such.
(King Prataparuda offers obeisances to Lord Caitanya and leaves.)

Narrator: Although Lord Caitanya knew within His heart that He was talking to King Prataparuda, He did not disclose it. And so, King Prataparuda, having achieved the goal of his life then offered a huge feast to Lord Caitanya and all of His devotees. Each of them had ten plates and ate until he was filled up to the neck! Since the time of King Prataparuda to the present day, it has become the custom for the king of Orissa to sweep road on the occasion of Lord Jagannath's Rathayatra Festival. Lord Jagannath's Rathayatra festival ki jai!
(Kirtan)